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## A Button



Sheriff Ames looked at the contents of the pockets of Col Mason, who was up on a charge of murder. Cal Moson was sitting

across the desk, pale and nervous "Sheriff," he pleaded again, "you know

I would never hurt anyone. I was sust walking back ofter asking Som Brigas for a Job." "And Sam Briggs, owner of the Lazvel ranch, had refused to hire you?"

"Yes, but-but I wouldn't kill a man for that, Sheriff. You've got to believe me." "I've got to believe Art Cook, too," sold Ames coldly, "He was riding by and saw you bending over the dead body of Briggs-with

g gun in your hand. How do you explain "I-I-" Col Mason swollowed hard, then

began again. "Well when I first sow him lying there shot. I was excited. Didn't know what I was doing. Didn't know I even picked the own up, sort of shorked, and . . . The prisoner's words forded into Jame si-

lence, of the sheriff's skeptical frown. Arres wished he could believe the 196s old

mon. Cal Mason had always been just a harmless deliter. Workert from rough to cough picking up odd jobs. He had the peculiar trait of a nock-rat, too, picking up any odd bits of things, hoping to sell them for a few

The contents of Mosor's packets proved that. Some bits of old string, several empty copper shells, a rawhide thong, a rusty old

spur, and a large button. No money, At least Mason hadn't robbed Briggs, But had he killed the rancher, in blind anser at

being refused a job? What stronger evidence could there be than to cotch a man at the scene of the crime, still presolve the murder

And Art Cook, owner of the Double-T ronch, was an unimpeachable witness. Yet Sheriff Asses hasitated. He knew there

had also been trouble and bitter words lately between Briggs and Cook, over the waterhale ring between their ranches, Still, sensible ranchers eventually took such disputed claims to court. They didn't shoot each other down like does The shariff sighed and called Art Cook in

from the next room, for his final statement, "You swear you saw Cal Mason standing own. the body of Son Briggs, with a gun in his hand?" "I do, Sheriff," nodded Art Cook firmly.

"He had no chance to speak owny ofter the deed. I grabbed him quick and brought him "I-I didn't do It." mooned Cal Mason hape-

lessly, "Meme Sheriff " Shoking his head, Ames picked up his keys

to lock up Cal Mason for trial. The keys lay near the trash from Mason's packets. The sheriff poused, storing. "That big brown button, Cal." he asked

suddenly, "Where did you pick it up?" Surprised, Moson thought a moreset, "Whyright near the dead man. Force of habit, I recken. Like nicking up the our. Dide't even know what I was daing. . . ."

"Movbe you did, without knowing it." snapped Arres. "What would that button be doing on the range-unless it was accidentally ripped off the coat of the killer? Maybe he had words with the victim first. A struggle. Look at your coat. Cal Moson! Do you see a missing button?"

The old man looked down nurried, "No button missing on my coat, Sheriff." "Right," agreed Ames. He swung around.

He didn't have to say anything, or even Art Cook was looking down at his own coot, his eyes slowly filling with horror. There

were holes in his coat for six big brown Six holes, But only five buttors

















## THE CHUCKWALLA



Like may other morbers of the listed introl, the described profess to live in the 4r, reshly, desert regions of southwaters United States, which is a supplied to the state of the states protects histed by the states of the states protects histed by growing fate for, by first envolving tions an available envolve, the checkwish inflates his large growing fate for, by first envolving the area of the states o

Oftentunes, this fixed hories hisself in the locasizat. His notifies are specially constructed to prevent sand from potting into his lungs, and his lower jaw fits usugly ever the upper so that sand does not penetrate his mouth. Feeding on flower buds and blossoms, the chack-

Feeding on flower bods and blossoms, the chackwalls does most of his foruging at night, for even this cold-blooded fellow finds the blazing desert sand untowiting during the daylight hours.



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